

# **Fostering distributed leadership in university teaching: a case study of 100 leaders of change**

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Fostering distributed leadership for driving change in university teaching requires an array of activities to scaffold individual learning and coherent, collective action by academics. The five elements required for distributed leadership in universities articulated by Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, and Ryland (2012) have been implemented by the Science and Mathematics network of Australian university educators (SaMnet). The elements include: (1) acknowledgement that influences for change occur at the government level (external) and university level (internal); (2) accommodation of academic culture, which respects autonomy for individuals, disciplines, and departments; (3) a need to engage staff and stakeholders at multiple levels; (4) networking and collaboration that enables activity by individuals and collectives to create tangible outcomes; and (5) conflict resolution procedures. We present a case study here reflecting two years of effort, where we have cultivated more than 25 action-learning projects pursued by 100 science academics across 18 institutions (*HERDSA News*, 2012). Salient features of this effort include cross-functional teams, insight provided by 'critical friends', support for scholarship of teaching and learning to foster rigour and enable career advancement, network building workshops that address leadership development, and opportunities for participants to select conceptual frameworks on leadership that resonate for them. Only time will tell whether SaMnet and government-funded, discipline-based networks are sufficiently successful to drive significant change in university teaching of science and mathematics. We can report that some junior academics, for example, are capitalising on opportunities to exert influence with key stakeholders. That suggests that necessary individual transitions are occurring.